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The Best of Friends

An Educational Video to Support the Training of Volunteers in
Cross-Cultural Communication

Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Social Services
Bachelor Thesis
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| <p>Tekijä(t) Otsikko</p> <p>Sivumäärä Aika</p> | <p>Artur Candive Kalohombo, Iain Huntley</p> <p>Ystävistä Parhaat – opetusvideo kulttuurien välisestä kommunikoinnista vapaaehtoiskoulutuksen tueksi.</p> <p>34 sivua + 4 liitettä</p> <p>Syksy 2014</p> |
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| Ohjaajat(s) | <p>Marja Kannelsuo, lehtori</p> <p>Terhi Salokannel-Stenberg, lehtori</p> |
| <p>Tämän toiminnallisen opinnäytetyön tarkoitus oli kehittää yhteistoiminnallinen opetusvideo kulttuurien välisten viestintätaitojen tukemiseen ja kehittämiseen vapaaehtoisten keskuudessa. Video on pääasiassa kehitetty yhteistyössä Mannerheimin Lastensuojeluliiton (MLL) Uudemman piirin Ystäväksi Maahanmuuttajaäidille vapaaehtoistoiminnan ja KAMU-projektin kanssa.</p> <p>”Osallistava toiminta” menetelmää hyödynnettiin videon kehittämisessä vapaaehtoisten kanssa. Aluksi kerättiin tietoa vapaaehtoisten tarpeista ja toiveista lähettämällä heille kyselylomake. Lisäksi vapaaehtoiset osallistuivat keskusteluihin ja vastasivat videon kehittämiseen liittyviin palautelomakkeisiin vapaaehtoisten koulutuksissa, joissa tehtiin myös havain- toja.</p> <p>Videoprojektista syntyi sarja videoita, jotka käsittelevät kulttuurien välisiä eroja ja erityisesti yhtäläisyyksiä. Videoita kehitettiin yhteistyössä vapaaehtoistyöntekijöiden kanssa ja tarinat kaikuivat positiivisuutta kuten oli odotettu.</p> <p>Vapaaehtoisten koulutuksesta saadut palautteet olivat yleisesti positiivisia, erityisesti liittyen videon käyttöön opetusvälineenä ja tukivälineenä kulttuurienväliseen viestintään liittyvissä pohdiskeluissa ja keskusteluissa. Lisäksi saatiin myös erilaisia kehittämisideoita.</p> | |
| Avainsanat | <p>sosiaalipedagogiikka, kulttuurien välinen viestintä, osallistavat toimintamenetelmät, opetusvideo</p> |

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| <p>The objective of this functional Bachelor's thesis was to develop a collaborative educational video for supporting and training cross-cultural communication skills amongst volunteers. The video was mainly developed in partnership with both the Southern District of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL) and their Friend for an Immigrant Mum volunteer programme, and the KAMU project.</p> <p>The Participatory Action methodology was utilised in order to develop the video together with the volunteers. A questionnaire was initially sent in order to access the needs and wishes of the volunteers. Additionally, volunteers participated in discussions and responded via feedback forms during the testing sessions of the video, where observations were also made.</p> <p>The video developed into a series of videos that address differences, and more importantly, similarities between cultures. The videos were developed in cooperation with the volunteers and their stories echoed positivity, as was expected.</p> <p>The feedback received from the testing sessions was generally positive, especially regarding the use of the video format as an educational tool and as supportive tool for reflections and discussions in relation to the cross-cultural communication topic. Additionally, various further developmental ideas were also received from the volunteers and via informal feedback.</p> | |
| Keywords | social pedagogy, cross-cultural communication, participatory action methodology, educational video |

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this functional Bachelor's Thesis was to develop a short and educational video into a tool to support development of cross-cultural communication competency for volunteers. The video contains information and portraits of real-life experiences of the volunteers who are already working in the Friend for an Immigrant Mum Programme of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare for the District of Southern Finland (MLL). The KAMU-project, which has widely been supporting our video project and the MLL are our working life partners.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' report (2013) on immigration affirms that the phenomenon of immigration is a global occurrence. According to the same report, the number of immigrants worldwide reached 232 million people in 2013 compared with 175 million in the year 2000. In addition, Europe and Asia accommodate nearly two thirds of the total amount of all international immigrants. (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2013.) From the above information, it can be concluded that living in multicultural societies has nowadays become more common in many parts of the world.

Finland has not been immune to the immigration phenomenon. In Finland the foreign national population has risen from 183 133 people in 2011 to 195 511 people in 2012 (Statistics Finland 2012) and the migration flow into Finland between 2008 and 2012 was by average 28 500 people every year (Migri 2012). This clearly shows that the amount of people from different cultures moving to Finland continues to increase. Therefore, people from different cultures voluntarily and involuntarily interact with each other.

There is a tendency of cross-cultural communication misunderstandings when people from different cultures interact (Lewis 1999). Therefore, socio-pedagogical training in the area of cross-cultural communication for professionals, volunteers and other members of the society is important in order to learn from each other and obtain the cross-cultural communication skills needed in order to find the cultural balance in a multicultural society (Korhonen and Puukari 2013: 35, 46, 377).

Both of us have developed a great interest on the topic of cross-cultural communication in relation to the social services field through previous working experiences. Upon the

planning phase of our thesis, previous researches were accessed and both possible target organisations and target groups were consulted via e-mail, telephone and face-to-face meetings regarding our topic. Consequently, the working life partner and other organisations that offer training for volunteers working with immigrants in Finland presented the need of such supporting tools. In addition, experienced volunteers themselves argued that they felt that more should be presented on the volunteers' training programme regarding cross-cultural communication.

2 Partner Organizations and Volunteers

The MLL provided allocated some resources and provided a place for assessment and evaluation of our thesis product and the KAMU-project provided funds to cover transportation costs and provided a space and place for publication and various channels of distribution of our video. Additionally, we received support and secured sponsors from different public, private and third sector organizations.

2.1 The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare Southern District

The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare was initially conceived in 1917 by Sophie Mannerheim, the sister of the General Carl Gustaf Mannerheim, who together with Erik Mandelin and Arvo Ylppö established the organisation in 1920 as a national non-governmental child welfare organisation in Finland, with the aim of reducing infant mortality and improving the quality of life for children (Korppi-Tommola 1990). The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare is the largest child welfare organisation in Finland. It has 93 000 members and 566 local associations throughout the country. The work of these local associations is supported by the League's 10 district organisations. (MLL 2013.) According to Korppi-Tommola (1990), the MLL aims to provide support for children, youth, and families with young children by organising and implementing various programmes in order to meet the needs of their target group.

The MLL Southern District is responsible for the region of Southern Finland, and is the umbrella organisation for 99 local MLL associations. They organise various activities for families and children such as Village Grandparents, Crosswalk Supervisors outside of school areas, and Family sponsors. (MLL Uudenmaan Piiri 2013.) It should be noted that these activities are all staffed by volunteers (Silvonon 2013). The Friend for an Immigrant Mum programme is one of the activities provided by the MLL Southern District.

Even though we were coordinating most of the work, the working life partner organisation was also required to allocate some resources. For example, the staff of the organisation coordinating this cooperation needed to include this partnership into their working schedule, which can create challenges against the goodwill for cooperation with our bachelor's thesis. The reasons for the MLL suitability as our working life partner was due to their having a strong enthusiasm on the topic, having a suitable research group in the form of volunteers who work in a multicultural environment in Finland's capital area, their continuous, and regular training for their volunteers, and their immediate ability and readiness to allocate human and other capital resources for our thesis.

The précis behind the Friend for an Immigrant Mum Programme (FIMP) is for native Finns who may or may not have their own children to befriend an immigrant mother in order to assist with their integration into Finnish society (MLL Uudenmaan Piiri 2013). The volunteer and the immigrant mother will form a programme partnership where the term "friend" is defined as a FIMP partner (Silvonen 2013). By doing different activities together, both the volunteer and their FIMP partner are able to learn about each other's cultures and way of life, and for the immigrant mother to receive assistance and advice in relation to navigating the Finnish social system (MLL Uudenmaan Piiri 2013).

Upon registration, which can take place via email or telephone, a possible profile match is created. After which, the mothers are interviewed face to face and the volunteers are required to attend a five-hour induction training. The induction training has been designed by MLL specifically for the FIMP programme. This can be followed up with further training for the volunteers at a later stage. (Silvonen 2013.)

2.2 The KAMU-Project

The KAMU-project is a developmental project offering friendship and guidance from volunteers to students of immigrant backgrounds who have learning difficulties and are partaking in a special study programme at Keskuspuisto Vocational College: Metsälä Unit (Metropolia 2013).

The project is a result of a joint partnership between Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (Metropolia UAS), the Keskuspuisto Vocational school, and the Kalliola settlement, and is funded for two years (2012 – 2014) by the European Social Fund and the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment for the Uusimaa

region. The volunteers of KAMU are students from Metropolia UAS and Kalliola settlement provides training and guidance to the volunteers of KAMU. (KAMU 2014.)

According to KAMU (2014), the project has created or give support to the development of many different innovative products and it is testing via its volunteers' programme a teaching method known as the Service Learning Model which involves cooperation between the educational institution and the customer with the aim to provide assistance to other organizations who want to use the same model based on the Finnish context.

Nevertheless, we have chosen to evaluate our thesis product with a different organisation's volunteer programme in order to avoid possible biases or the risk of organisational influence on the outcomes our developmental project, even though the KAMU-project has also a programme of voluntary work with immigrants. However, the KAMU-project also presented great interest in our Bachelor thesis ideas, provided consultation, covered part of the costs, and offered to provide extensive support regarding the publication and the distribution process of this functional thesis and its products' outcome.

2.3 Volunteers

The meaning of volunteer in the context of social services is defined by Oppenheimer (2009: 5-11) as people who work unpaid in helping voluntarily others by using the skills and resources available to them by means of orienting various group activities, helping marginalised or people at risk, advocating for disadvantage people, counselling, or just being a support person for someone in need.

As the tendency is an increase in the numbers of people working as volunteers in the future, volunteers will play an even more key role in various projects and organisations worldwide. Unfortunately, volunteers are not always educated in the fields which they choose to work in. Therefore, it is important that organisations provide training for volunteers in relation to the particular activities in which they participate. (Connors 2011: XII, 205 - 210.)

CEV (2006) emphasises that volunteering has the aim to create outcomes that bring an added value into the society like promoting inclusion and integration, and additionally both the clients and volunteers will benefit from it. At the European Union level the debate about voluntary work started in 1989 that culminated with the EU Declaration 38 on

Voluntary Service Activities in 1999, which recognises the positive effect of voluntary work towards social solidarity. Subsequently, the numbers of organizations and volunteers in EU are continuously rising. CEV (2006.)

In the year 2009, twenty-nine percent of Finns over the age of ten years of age had undertaken volunteer work (Statistics Finland 2011). According to MLL's (2013) own statistics regarding volunteer work for the year 2012, 26 022 volunteers participated in volunteer work throughout various MLL programmes in Finland corresponding to 1 062 269 total working hours. It can be seen from this information that a significant part of MLL's programmes depend on volunteers in order to function, with volunteers making up a large part of their human resources.

In all MLL volunteer programmes, volunteers have the responsibility to promote the emergence of social networks for clients and they have the right to get all of the available support or training needed to perform their work, while social pedagogues have the duty to provide tools and support the volunteers in order to improve their interaction skills (MLL 2010: 4 – 6). Thus, Silvonen's (2013) statement regarding the differences in responsibilities between volunteers and social pedagogues is correspondingly supported by MLL (2010). The FIMP volunteers are the main target group for this study. These volunteers were involved at all the phases of the video development process and had suggested some further developmental ideas.

The main issue at MLL is that both the volunteers and the immigrant mother can in this sense be considered to be service users, since the volunteers' work is coordinated and guided by bachelors of social services and social workers. However, the tasks performed by the volunteers do not differ from social pedagogues if they are assigned to the same task or similar working environments. The difference is that volunteers are trained to work only within a specific target group and to perform very specific tasks aiming to help or support individuals and groups in a mutual partnership manner, rather than a typical counsellor-client partnership. In this mutual partnership the volunteer working description includes only common free-time and leisure activities between the mothers. (Silvonen 2013.)

3 Cross-Cultural Communication

Our thesis focused specifically on the basics of cross-cultural communication competence at the individual level, which is asserted as the ability to understand one's own culture, being aware of what kind of possible taboos, generalisations, assumptions about other cultures that exist in said culture, and how to deal with them while understanding about the fundamental variables in which cultures differ or resemble each other. These assumptions are not necessarily negative, and therefore, the content of our video focused on positive experiences rather than negative experiences with the aim of supporting and encouraging the FIMP volunteers as the target group towards effective communication when meeting other cultures. Emphasis was placed on the importance of positive experiences, focusing as a gateway for the promotion of mutual learning, respectful cross-cultural communication and overcoming the fear of the unknown. (Korhonen and Puukari 2013: 19, 84-86, 183, 331, 362,377.)

Culture is a very broad concept. It is often defined as the development of certain behaviours which are particular to a people sharing, for example, the same geographical area, religion, language, ethnicity, age, gender or social class. Generally, such behaviours are inter-generational and constantly evolving. (Sitaram 1970: 305.) The features of such behaviours in relation to culture are lessons learned from the past or history, principles, beliefs and values. Furthermore, it is essential to take into consideration the knowledge regarding the features of these behaviours in that people as human beings have many similarities; not only biological characteristics and needs but also the sense of existence. (Korhonen and Puukari 2013: 12-15.)

Communication is classified as comprehending and to be comprehended by the communicator's target group. Communication between two or more people from different cultures involves the communicator and the listener. However, the roles of each party are interchangeable as the communication and listening roles occur simultaneously. The thinking of both the communicator and the listener are influenced by their respective cultures, and therefore the normal mechanisms used to interpret the meaning of the message being conveyed are different for each party. Consequently, the process of understanding the message and having the message understood is much more challenging in communication between people of the same culture. (Sitaram 1970: 305-308.)

Throughout this report, we will be using the term cross-cultural communication in relation to the various forms of communication between people from different cultures. There

has been an ongoing debate regarding the connection between the terms used to describe communication in multicultural environments. Gudykunst (2003: 159-160) attempted to separate the ideas of cross-cultural communication and intercultural communication by defining cross-cultural as the comparison of behaviour while intercultural as the examination of behaviour between two cultures. Nevertheless, he does not repudiate the symbiotic relationship between these terms. Korhonen and Puukari (2013: 17) state that researchers in past have made use many different terms for each particular form of cultural interaction such as transcultural, intercultural and cross-cultural. However these various terms are interdependent in a manner that to be able to understand one requires knowledge of other terminology used in this field.

In this context competence means the ability to make as correct as possible social judgments about other peoples' verbal and non-verbal messages. Verbal messages include both spoken and written language, while non-verbal messages involve a silent language and human gestures through various muscular and body movements. Verbal and non-verbal communications are often interconnected and can take place at the same time. (Lustig and Koester 2010: 65-71.) Therefore, in the video we not only included aspects of verbal communication, but also elements of non-verbal codes.

A study conducted by Hofstede et al (2012: 383) shows that cross-cultural communication competencies can prevent cross-cultural misunderstandings, and described them as conflicts that arise when cultures inter-communicate which in-turn can make life difficult for all involved even though all parties intend goodwill. Although this study was conducted in different circumstances, the importance of basic cross-cultural communication competence for FIMP volunteers can be similarly based upon the results of Hofstede's study since multicultural working environment settings are applicable for both situations.

However, in this sense one does not need to know about each particular culture of the thousands of cultures and sub-cultures existing in the world in order to become competent in cross-cultural communication, and thus cross-cultural communication skills can be considered to be a lifelong learning process (Prince and Hoppe 2000:8, 26-27). Interaction is the main element in the MLL Friend for an Immigrant Mum Programme (FIMP) and since the volunteers' partnership at FIMP is between people of different cultures, particular attention should be paid to the cross-cultural communication skills of the volunteers working in the programme (Silvonen 2013).

Competence in communicating with people from different cultures requires the pre-requisite skill of comparing one culture with another. These cross-cultural comparisons do not only refer to differences, but also similarities. Subsequently, this interdependency between intercultural and cross-cultural communication competence indicates that competency is acquired in the same manner. This includes firstly the access to information about other cultures and knowledge about one's own culture, secondly the motivation towards encounters with people from a different culture with positivism and openness and thirdly, acting as an informed and motivated culturally communicative competent individual. (Lustig and Koester 2010: 54-71.) Consequently, this video was aimed to be a part of the process of informing, motivating and activating the FIMP volunteers towards the enhancement of their cross-culture competence.

4 Social Pedagogy

In the field of social pedagogy, pedagogy takes the form of the teaching of life skills, otherwise known as competences, and can be synonymous with education and learning which takes place through various processes. In this context, learning is defined as a change in the way of thinking and acting which leads to positive societal outcomes in a manner that the learner acquires mastery of new cognitive or social skills. Social pedagogues can work as motivators towards this change, but consequently everyone has the ability to learn or acquire new skill mastery from these experiences at their own individual level. (Stephens 2013: 4 and 16.)

The creation and implementation of our thesis was supported by various social pedagogical concepts. The video as the product of this Bachelor's Thesis was evaluated as a learning tool or social pedagogical tool as part of the training of the volunteers and it is openly available for anyone else interested in the same topic. In order to have a better understanding of this type of learning, it is important at this point to explore the meaning of pedagogy by focusing on its significance in the term "social pedagogy".

Stephens (2013) defines social pedagogy as a social science learning field with its own values and norms; where social pedagogues are the field professionals which, together with other members of the society, try to improve common well-being through respectful dialogue. Thus, individuals and groups should be empowered in order to make their own decisions and take their own actions, with the social pedagogue only playing the role of facilitator in order to help people to help themselves (Stephens 2013: 27, 58, 142). Other

sources which we examined define social pedagogy in a similar manner to Stephens or the definitions discussed were parallel to each other.

Therefore, this functional study represents pure social pedagogy in action since its intent is to provide a social learning tool for the volunteers of the MLL's FIMP programme. Firstly, because it wasn't done from the perspective of the social pedagogues but from the point of view of the volunteers themselves by directly involving the target group in the creation of the video, its contents, and throughout the evaluation process of the product. Our role was defined by the standards for social pedagogues, and we followed the values, norms, and ethics of the profession.

4.1 Participation, Democratic-voice and Minimal Intervention

Partnership or participation is defined as service users being given the opportunity to influence as much as possible the issues which are interweaved with their lives. They are encouraged to become involved in all phases of the process by accessing and analysing their own needs, developing in conjunction with the practitioner an implementation plan, and to evaluate and discuss desired outcomes in order to seek ways for improvements in the future. (Parrott 2010: 43.)

Democratic-Voice describes the process in which service users are able to influence the services provided to them, whilst Minimal Intervention explains how the practitioner should work with the service user in such a way as to cause as little interference as possible in their life. In addition, practitioners should have the awareness and the ability to prevent, reduce, or manage the absence of formal power that service users have in relation to institutions and organisations. (Parrott 2010: 45.) Comparable definitions interconnected to anti-oppressive practice are similarly outlined by Dalrymple and Burke (2006: 48).

Using this basis, the research aim was implemented in conjunction with the FIMP volunteers; as to listen and take their opinions into consideration and work towards better power sharing between MLL and the volunteers. The video was fully made utilising the opinions and feedback of the volunteers themselves without any influence from the organisation, which has been the case of the current MLL's FIMP volunteer training course contents.

4.2 The Training of Volunteers

In Finland, all organisations working with volunteers offer training for the purpose of preparing them for their work, and MLL is no exception. Even though volunteers are not considered to be professionals in the area of social services, they do make an important contribution to the field and are expected to act in a professional manner when working with the immigrant mothers in MLL's FIMP programme (Silvonon 2013).

This type of training can be classified as adult education, where one of the objectives for learners is to acquire autonomy and responsibility in the way of thinking about how learning takes place through the process of interpreting the meanings of past and current personal experiences in order to determine a correct course of action in their future endeavours (Mezirow 1991:3 and 12). Another term used in connection to this type of training is professional's pedagogy which Larrison and Korr (2013:2) define as a pedagogical method that helps the learner to understand and acquire knowledge in order to perform a task when it must be in order to assist others.

One of the valued practices in social pedagogy is the ability to involve the learner directly through active participation in planning, choosing, and implementing ways of learning or through the use of tools aiming for the same purpose (Parrott 2010: 42-43). Consequently, such practices which involve the strong participation of service users will shape the conceptual framework of this study's implementation process.

4.3 Video as a Learning Tool

Learning by the use of video is outlined by Smaldino et al. (2005: 6-7) as the formation of knowledge, acquirement of new a skill, and positive transformation in the attitudes of a person through access to information and interaction with others, and the other things around them. Moreover, learning can take place by mimicking realistic events, responding to stimulus, reflecting on events, and conducting experiments. In relation to the social field, learning takes place through cooperation between the instructor and the learner so that learners can shape and have more control over the structure of the learning programme. (Smaldino et al. 2005: 6-8.)

Vuorinen's (1998: 40-47) study summarises that in adult education, senses and sights such as hearing, seeing, and feeling are very important and the more senses and sights involved in learning, the bigger the inclination of effective learning (see figure 1.). Therefore, video can be a potential candidate tool for effective learning as agreed by both Vuorinen (1998: 40-47) and (Smaldino et al. 2005: 9 and 288) as the combination of

video content elements such as sound, music, voice, text and action through moving images activate peoples' senses and sights.

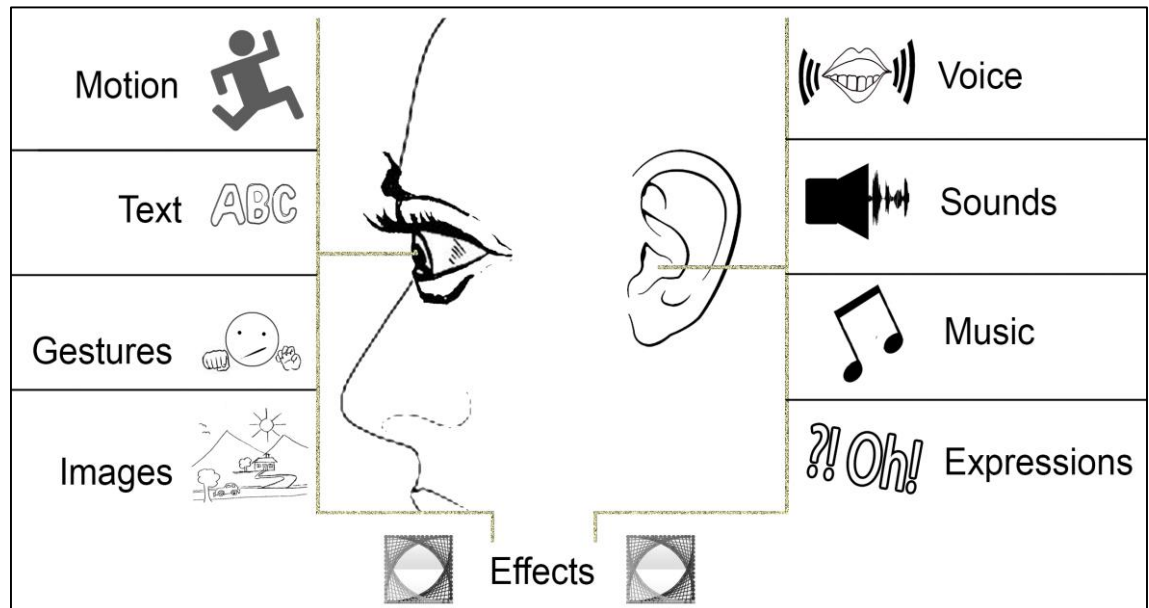


Figure 1. Video as a learning tool in relation to the human senses

We used experimental documentary film production technics in order to make the video. Documentary film is a combination of different real-life filmed documented situations, since the scenes shown are carefully chosen by the editor. One cannot call it a real life situation but rather a portrait of real life experiences or real life drama. (Aufderheide 2007: 1-2.) In connection to social pedagogy, these types of videos can be used as a potential tool to change social attitudes due to the emotional impact on individuals, creation of a common topic for discussion among a community, and the promotion of understanding about other cultures in cases where the video provides such content (Smaldino et al. 2005: 288).

5 Developmental Task

Training for volunteers at MLL's FIMP programme has been conducted using Microsoft PowerPoint presentations and speech (Silvonen 2013). Our task was to enhance the existing training course material with an educative video. The video content and script was shaped by the existing MLL volunteers' views regarding our thesis topic and by sharing their experiences from the FIMP programme.

The objective of the video is to raise awareness and improve cross-cultural communication basic skills for MLL's volunteer workers and to therefore minimise the misunderstandings that can occur in cross-cultural communication. We acknowledge that it is important to involve the volunteers in the process in order to create a video that best represents their point of view as part of the methodological process. However, the intention of this study is not to emphasise the participation or the empowerment of the volunteers, but rather to research the use of the video as a viable educational tool for the improvement of cross-cultural communication awareness and skills.

The video was intended to be used as part of the training course for the new volunteers, who later evaluated the contents of the video in connection to cross-cultural communication skills development and its use as a supportive tool for the training. The evaluation process then lead to further developmental ideas. Once the central framework has been developed, this particular product can be used and adapted for other organisations and individuals who may be interested in this particular topic.

6 Participatory Action Research Methodology

Due to the nature of our developmental task and research strategy Participation Action Research (PAR) was chosen as our preferred qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research attempts to understand various phenomena in connection to the quality of products and services by making use of the personal experiences of the research subject. It uses various practices such as observation, interviews, and case studies in order to gain a better perspective on the subject matter in relation to the topic. (Denzin: 1994:2.) We used PAR in order to gain a better understanding of the FIMP, and to give the volunteers a voice when the production of the video takes place.

PAR is defined as a form of social research which involves researchers, organisations, and the community into conjoined action and activities through the fair participation of all actors in order to promote social analysis and change. In fact, PAR aims to research and create ways in which to involve members of either the community or a particular organisation to be able to take control of the matters which affect them, along with the aim of both minimising and preventing social challenges in which they face. Therefore, PAR can be seen as having a social change agenda in which the main agenda is to study the issues that affect the participants as opposed to resolving them. PAR makes

use of qualitative and quantitative research methods such as surveys, statistical analysis, interviews, focus groups, ethnographies, and life histories, observation, and feedback methods can be used. (Greenwood et al 1998: 4-7.)

This method appears to be relevant and applicable to our thesis because, according to Chevalier. et al (2013:9-16), at a local level PAR aims to solve, minimise and prevent problems in a practical manner or find effective and innovative ways to raise awareness through reflection, group discussion and interactive learning. The lifespan of these processes can be thought of as being infinite since the problems to be solved are social and society is constantly changing. (Chevalier. et al 2013:9-16.)

As part of the planning process, the volunteers who have previously undertaken the induction programme and are currently working with the immigrant mothers were invited to participate in the planning and creation of the video (see figure 2.). We worked directly with the volunteers in order to achieve our goal of creating a video for MLL's FIMP induction programme, as opposed to working above them. The evaluation process was planned to be continuous mainly through self-completion questionnaires in the form of small surveys and simple feedback forms and through participant observation.

Self-completion questionnaires can be handled in printing or in digital form. It is recommended to make these as simple as possible, but with clear questions, have a clear structure, and to be easily accessible and understood. Self-completion questionnaires can be answered in the absence of the researcher. The criticism of questionnaires in general is regarding the fact that they have been used in some cases without any theoretical grounds, with pre-defined goals by the questionnaire makers. Therefore, the questionnaire questions must be well connected to the developmental question and the theories of research in order to protect the quality and validity of the study in question. (May 2011: 93 - 130.)

The reasons why we chose to make use of participant observation weren't merely to have direct contact with the target group, but to also collect valuable social scientific information relevant to our continuous evaluative process that would be otherwise hard to obtain solely from questionnaires. May (2011: 161 - 190) asserts that in comparison to other evaluative methods, observations make it difficult for researchers to impose their own views and wishes. During the observation sessions, the researcher needs to look, listen, experience, participate, and write everything down transcribe everything which

takes places. This information is then written at a later time in a reflective manner. The possible implications and challenges are that the researchers may consciously or unconsciously overlook participants' views in order to impose their own reality. Therefore, it is recommended to have two or more observers. May (2011: 161 - 190.)

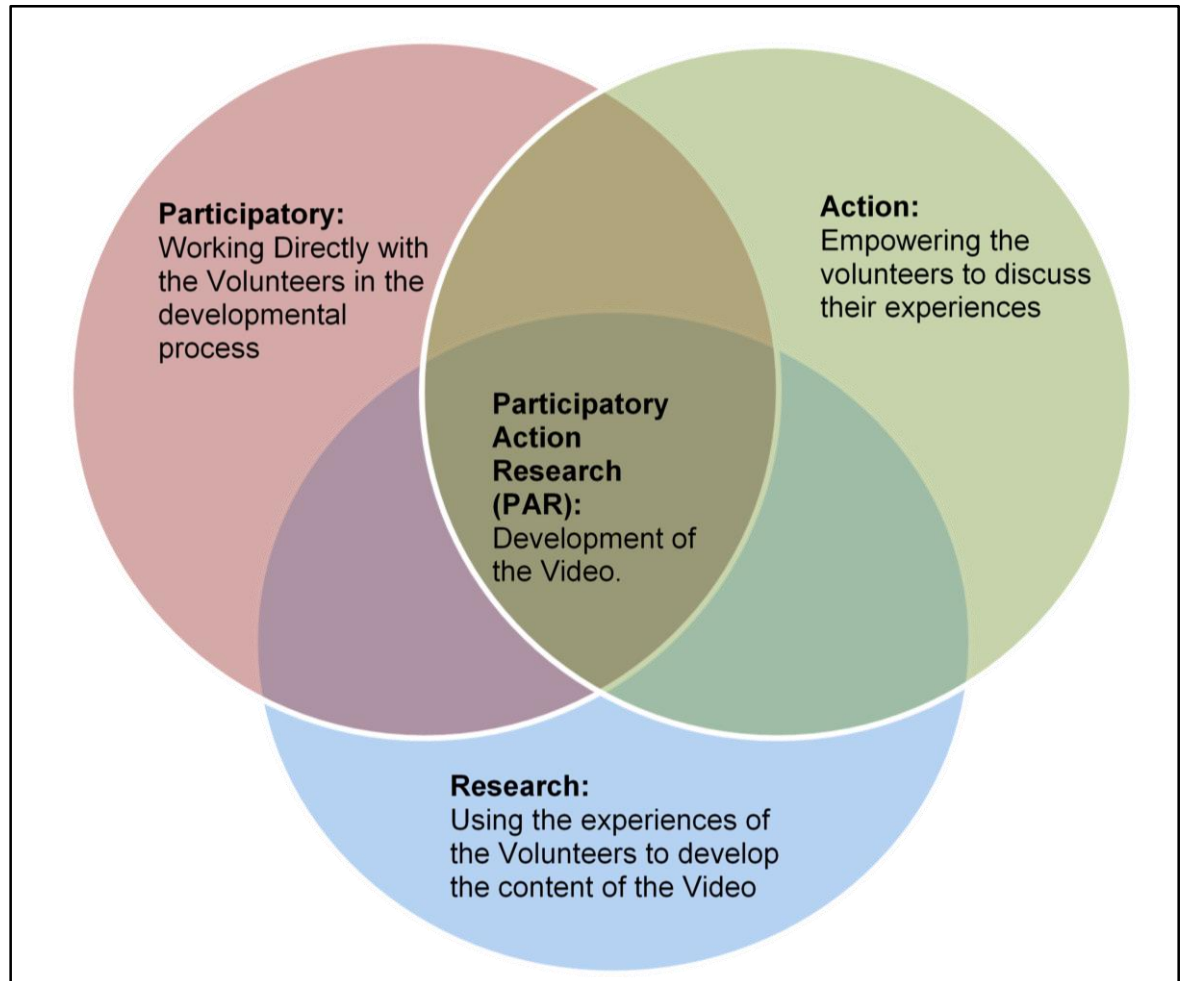


Figure 2. PAR in relation to our thesis adopted from Chevalier et al (2013, p.10)

As can be seen from the above illustration (figure 2.), the participatory aspect relates to how the FIMP volunteers were invited to work directly in the production of the video. The action phase shows the how the volunteers were empowered to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in relation to their work as part of the FIMP programme. The implementation or research phase demonstrates how these experiences were used to develop the content of the video. It should be noted that PAR was used again during the review phase of the video, as the volunteers were invited to give their feedback and suggestions for further development of the video in the future.

7 Video Production and Evaluative Process

The use of PAR methodology in the production and evaluation phases of the video can be seen as the respectful exchange of ideas that took place between the volunteers and ourselves, which according to Stephens (2013) is vital in social pedagogical work. Working on behalf of the clients as an expert does not mean doing things for them, but rather to empower them, which is defined in the context of this thesis as supporting and motivating individuals and groups to make their own decisions and take actions by themselves in order to find social solutions for the social matters which trouble them. These actions can take place through the participation, planning, and execution of social pedagogic solutions through dialogue and mutual respect between both parties. (Stephens 2013: 27-30.)

Technically, the production component of the video requires basic audio-visual knowledge of filming and editing, which we have acquired through previous studies at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, our working experiences, and our hobbies connected to media work such as music and image processing.

7.1 Choosing the topic

Our interest in the topic of cross-cultural communication originated from various working and educational experiences, both in Finland and abroad. Both working and studying in multi-cultural environments has enabled us to see the impact of effective cross-cultural communication skills in daily life. Through these experiences, we have both seen the importance of effective cross-cultural communication skills in order to minimise any communicative misunderstandings which can potentially occur.

Whilst conducting background research into cross-cultural communication skills, we noticed that most of the information available regarding this topic is from perspective of business and enterprise. As we delved further into this topic and how it relates to the area of social services, we were surprised to find that there was only a small amount of recent information available.

As students studying the Bachelor of Social Services, we have also noticed during our studies the lack of information regarding cross-cultural communication skills in this area. With immigration to Finland increasing, combined with the fact that effective communi-

cation is a key component of social work (Seden 2005:19), the need for increased awareness regarding cross-cultural communication skills in the area of social services can be seen.

The starting point of this thesis idea was to research the topics of communicative competences, cross-cultural communication, and the promotion of dialogue with volunteers as the main target group. From that point, several organisations which provide voluntary work programmes, mainly in the capital region, were approached and contacted with an offer of the production of an audio-visual tool in order to support the training of volunteers; specifically those that work regularly with people from migrant backgrounds. In the contact letter, we indicated that we would be open to creating with them any thesis product related to the same topic in accordance to both their and their clients' needs.

Responses and interest regarding the thesis topic came from different organisations by e-mail from places such as the Citizen Forum of Finland, who offered to be a distribution channel for the thesis product via their website. They also offered to notify over 400 people from different organisations existing on their active network channel about our thesis.

During the planning phase of this thesis, there was an exchange of ideas between us and various organisations such as Kalliola Settlement, the Young Men's Christian Association of Finland (YMCA), and the Metropolia University Applied Sciences' (Metropolia UAS) KAMU-project. These organisations stated that they would be able to make available possible resources in relation to distribution and evaluation.

7.2 Assessing the Need of FIMP

The findings and results of the assessment process have shaped the script of the video. In the production of educative videos, the script is defined as a plan consisting of decisions based upon the types of information and portraits of real life experiences which are relevant to the topic and aims, and which of these will be presented (Aufderheide 2007: 1-2 and 22).

As part of the preparation for the production of the video, a needs assessment was conducted by the use of a variety of methods. These methods included a discussion with MLL regarding what they felt their needs were. This was followed by asking the current volunteers to complete a questionnaire as to ascertain what areas of the training course

could be improved upon, and finally by attending the training course itself as to have direct contact with our target group. Choosing the video as a viable medium to present the topic of cross-cultural communication came from similar ideas produced by both MLL and ourselves prior to our initial contact. This resulted in a mutual interest which led to our first meeting.

7.2.1 Meeting and Discussion with MLL

In order to enable us to further develop the idea of our thesis with our partner organisation, a face-to-face meeting was arranged with the FIMP coordinators at the MLL offices. During the meeting, we started to immediately develop together implementation strategies. The first agreed strategy was that we, in our role as researchers, should be in direct contact with volunteers and assess their needs in order to see the types of issues would be the most relevant for the content of the video.

The current state of their training programme for the FIMP was discussed. We explained to them our idea concerning the creation of a training video regarding cross-cultural communication. During the meeting the representatives of FIMP stated that they already have a section in their training course which addresses cross-cultural communication, and therefore the need for an education video regarding such a topic was not necessarily required.

However, the representatives did show great interest in using a video as an educational tool within their training course. After further discussion, we came to the conclusion that an educational video on the topic of cross-cultural communication for the MLL training course should not be designed by ourselves or the coordinators of the FIMP, but rather should depict real-life situations of the volunteers and the interactions with their FIMP partners. In addition, volunteers as our target group would be given the role to develop the composition of the script and the decisions to be made during the video editing process. Therefore, the volunteers' own views shaped the scriptwriting process. In a documentary film, scriptwriting is defined as planning and deciding on what information and portraits of real life experiences are relevant to our topic and aims (Aufderheide 2007: 1-2 and 22).

7.2.2 Questionnaire

The main goal of the questionnaire was to listen to the volunteers' perspectives and their points of view on cross-cultural awareness and the communication involved in their work.

Subsequently we would edit the video according to their opinions and the results of the questionnaire. We would like to emphasise that the questionnaire was not seeking the need of having a video as part of the existing course, but rather what the contents the video should consist of and what would be most appropriate types of scenes and comments that should be included during the editing process.

The volunteers were asked to complete an anonymous online questionnaire using the LimeSurvey application. LimeSurvey is a free open-source Internet software that creates various types of anonymous and non-anonymous Internet forms and creates database tables and graphics from the responses submitted (LimeSurvey 2014). The questions were constructed in the open-ended style, in order to encourage the respondents to give extensive and detailed answers. Additionally, we were very mindful of not using any leading statements during the questionnaire creation period. Furthermore, we made sure that the questions presented in the questionnaire were relevant to our topic. The questionnaire is attached as appendix 1.

Overall, we are utilising the knowledge and experiences of the volunteers as experts in their field. This action can be seen to be a part of Participatory Action Research. As Illsley and Niemi (1981) stated, the purpose of training should be to prioritise the needs of the volunteers although the goals of the organisation shouldn't be ignored, as long the benefits are mutual.

The feedback which was received enabled the participants to share their experiences as volunteers in the FIMP programme whilst allowing us to have a better understanding of possible content of the video. The most commonly received feedback was regarding gastronomy, similarities between cultures regarding the raising children, the successful communication without the use of a common language. Other feedback received showed that the volunteers were in general satisfied with the current MLL training course, however they enthusiastically support of enhancing it with an educative video.

7.2.3 Attending the Training Course

As part of the research phase for this thesis, we attended one of the training courses for the new volunteers as part of the FIMP programme. Attending the course allowed us to make observations, to participate actively in the group discussions, to hear and know about the participants' expectations, and to gain a better understanding of both the training course and the FIMP programme in general. We additionally felt that we would to be

able to better ascertain the required content of the video that would best suit the subject matter of the training course, and in what way the video would be able to enhance the volunteers' learning.

The training course was conducted at the MLL Southern District's office in Pasila, and was around five hours in duration. There were fourteen participants in attendance (excluding ourselves), which all had different reasons for wanting to participate in the programme. The participants were broken up into small groups of three to four people, and were seated around small tables. The purpose of creating the smaller groups was to allow for small group discussion at certain points within the training.

A wide variety of topics were covered in relation to the FIMP programme including but not limited to the different reasons why people move to Finland, Finnish culture and how social norms in Finland can differ from other cultures, reflective listening and communication, cross-cultural communication including non-verbal communication, and the use of appropriate Finnish in relation to the listeners' skill level. The course structure included photos, Microsoft PowerPoint presentations, and discussion.

7.3 Process of Making the Video

We started planning the process of production of the video immediately after the first meeting with the MLL. Together, with the target organization and the volunteers, we agreed to develop the video during the spring 2014 period progressively in four (4) phases respectively; planning, filming, editing and evaluation phases.

The planning phase involved making a working schedule for the spring of 2014, script-writing and storyboarding the video. During this phase, we wrote and clarified what the content of the video should contain based upon the information which was collected whilst assessing the needs of our target group. We used this information as part of the working guidelines applied throughout the process. Therefore, it was decided that the theme of the script should include showing a volunteer meeting her FIMP partner, different gestures used in non-verbal communication, and the connection between food and multiculturalism. Furthermore, it was decided that an introduction should be shown in between each of the scenes.

As a secondary plan, we contacted several other organizations that work with multicultural groups and have activities that support interaction between Finnish and immigrants.

We had also thought of using actors for stories written by the FIMP volunteers. We asked for sponsors from business and private sector organisations, from which we obtained the use of different venues and locations to film the scenes and make experiments, free car parking and free vouchers to be use as appreciative gifts for participants.

Filming sessions involved planning with the volunteers shooting locations, situations and dates when we would follow the volunteers and their FIMP partner with cameras in order to capture real-life scenarios during their meetings. These were to be followed by separate interviews with both the volunteer and their FIMP partner about each particular event. The goal was to document practical examples of the cross-cultural communication situations that can occur in FIMP programme, which was later edited and used for the training of upcoming volunteers. Subsequently, the volunteers can reflect and discuss their thoughts and feelings regarding other peoples' experiences, and enable for learning to take place.

The editing phase involves usage of Adobe Premiere Pro, which is a computer application used by both amateurs and professionals in editing, enhancing and exporting video projects into various media formats (Adobe 2013). Using Adobe Premiere Pro, we selected and put together in a progressive sequence a range of filmed scenes, together with images of cross-cultural communication situations and speeches from the interviews. These decisions were based upon the conclusions made from the needs assessment and from social pedagogical practices in connection to our topic. Once the video was edited, we tested it and collected the first round of feedback from the new volunteers and informal respondents such as working colleagues, friends and schoolmates. Based on this feedback we made a few changes and prepared to test it a second time.

We managed to deliver what was initially planned to become the main content of our video package, which was to show and to listen to the mothers of the MLL FIMP. The main video package shows two separate meetings and the story of two pairs of the MLL FIMP mothers. The participants did not want to be filmed in their homes or their family members to be shown as we initially suggested based on the wishes of the needs assessment questionnaire respondents, but to be filmed in neutral locations as chosen by them, and to talk about how their families' meetings are usually conducted in the video instead.

Even though, we had a clear initial plan on how to make this video, we had also experimented with many different creative ways to bring information and audio-visual elements in connection to the basic skills of cross-cultural communication. As result, we created a separate introduction video, which shows faces, smiles and gestures of people from different cultures and a bonus video, which intended to explain social diversity by using a fresh vegetables' salad as a figurative element. We chose to incorporate these two experimental videos into the main package, because they were very short, flowed very well when combined with the main video package, diversify the video contents in order to widen the options of debate among audiences as wished by the volunteers in the first round of testing.

7.3.1 Resources, Equipment and Costs

This developmental task in general can be implemented cost free. However, we acknowledge that some financial resources may be needed in order to make the production more efficient and less time-consuming, which in turn minimises the risk of project schedule running past the deadline.

In order to achieve the standard quality of the video, the basic equipment needed for the production of the video is one or two cameras, camera stands, headphones, microphones, and a computer equipped with basic editing software. However, if one wishes to enhance the quality of the video, advanced media production tools and equipment such as a three to five lighting set, reflector filters, advanced professional cameras, and an audio-visual advanced editing room would be required. For that reason, we have organised an official cooperation between the Social Services Department and the Culture Department of Metropolia UAS in order to have access to more advanced equipment, which meet our needs better. Financially, the KAMU-project through the Metropolia UAS covered some of our related car usage expenses from the spring of 2014 as shown in Appendix 2.

In relation to human resources, we planned to play many different video making technical roles simultaneously. These roles included managing video cameras, directing the scenes on site by selecting appropriated positions for the cameras in order to bring the most realistic as possible shot of the scenes, and by taking in consideration natural resources from such as city noise, sun light and background views. The main personages in the video were the pairs from the FIMP which were provided to us by MLL. However,

we had of a secondary plan regarding participants of the videoed scenes, which we intended to secure via our extended networks in the event that we would encounter challenges in obtaining suitable FIMP pairs.

7.3.2 Challenges Faced and Solutions Found

The questionnaire used for assessing the needs of the volunteers was initially done as a Microsoft Word document and was sent via email to the FIMP volunteers via MLL. The volunteers were then expected to return their answers directly to us through email. However, we received only two responses in ten days. We realised immediately that by receiving answers via email, we were not encouraging participants to speak freely and therefore ensuring their confidentiality, nor were we safeguarding their privacy. In response, we created an online survey-type questionnaire using LimeSurvey. Consequently, we received forty-five attempted responses in less than ten days, of which eighteen were successfully completed and a further twenty-five were categorised as invalid.

When arranging meeting times with the volunteers for filming, we encountered challenges when trying to find a time that would be satisfactory for all parties. As part of our first contact with the volunteers, we proposed a range of possible meeting times and dates. We also gave the option to the volunteers being able to suggest their own times if none of the suggested times were suitable. Moreover, we created a contingency plan consisting of asking MLL to arrange a second pair of FIMP participants if circumstances arose which were beyond everyone's control.

During the last filming session, the initial location agreed for the shooting, closed before the MLL pair late arrival at the site. Due to the harsh weather conditions on that day, it was clear that a quiet and an indoor location was needed. We quickly browsed online all possible nearby indoor public places, contacted them by telephone, and introduced ourselves professionally. We then explained what we were doing, why we were calling then and offered them credits in the end of the video. If the initial contact was successful, we then explained the situation in more detail in the case that it seemed that we had a chance to use that particular location. Responses were very positive and we decided to take the quietest location from the offers that we received due to the quality of the video sound.

During the testing session, we encountered some technical problems shortly after our arrival. Firstly, the computers of MLL were unable to read the video's file format. Secondly, the projector that was provided by the conference room was not compatible with the resolution formats of the laptops which we had brought with us. The third challenge that we faced during the testing period was the absence of sound from the video sound monitors. However, we were able to overcome these challenges in a calm and patient manner due to our knowledge and previous experiences in the media field.

7.4 Testing the Video and Feedback Sessions

We organized two testing and feedback sessions of the video. The first one took place during the spring 2014 and the second one during the autumn 2014, which were integrated into the MLL FIMP volunteer's training courses. We agreed many weeks in advance with the coordinators of the programme about the date and time, and this was reserved for us to test the video during the induction course. We created a printed feedback form, which was given to the participants after each video presentation session with the option to refuse in case they preferred not to take part in the feedback session.

The combined amount of participants in both sessions was 20 people, all of which completed the feedback form. There were four multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question presented in the first session, which were mainly in direct connection to our developmental task's contents. The first feedback form can be found attached to this report as Appendix 3 – Feedback Form 1. For the second session we added a new form with more questions related to the cross-cultural communication basic skill that is defined by Korhonen and Puukari (2013: 19) and the video as an element in the volunteers' training. This form can be found as Appendix 4 - Feedback Form 2. In addition, we observed and took notes on the reactions of the viewers while they were watching the video. These observations gave useful information for possible changes that we still could make to the video.

Verbally, the volunteers pointed out at some misspelled Finnish words and suggested different ways to correct the Finnish language subtitles in the video. The written feedback responses indicated that majority of the respondents strongly felt that this video can be used to attract and motivate mothers to become volunteers of the FIMP, that watching a video was a good way to learn new things, and that the video gives a general picture about the Friend for an Immigrant Mothers' activities. Many of the respondents were

surprised about the positivism the mothers shown on the video, which made them wondering about the challenges that they may face during the programme. The question regarding how the video could help to learn more about communication between cultures had divided evenly the opinion of respondents.

Based on the feedback of the first session, we made some improvements on the video subtitles and texts and we took some scenes out to make the video flow more dynamically. The new version of the video with these improvements was shown to a new group of volunteers in the second testing and feedback session. This time, we observed that negative reactions regarding the text or technical aspects decreased at this session and the focus and reactions were instead in relation to the content of the video. The responses received from the Feedback Form 1 in the first testing round were almost similar to the ones received in the second round of testing.

Feedback Form 2 contained only two multiple-choice and two open-ended questions, because we wanted to focus on how the video can support debate about cross-cultural communication. Based on the received responses, the majority of participants agreed that the video works well as supportive tool for debates and reflection on the importance of understanding the relationship between one owns life history, culture, own values and assumptions while interacting with another in a multicultural environment. The second question created a bit of confusion among the participants as they expressed on the open-ended questions. In addition, some respondents expressed the desire to also aspects of cultural differences, more dramatic situations, more challenges, unsuccessful stories, and even the negative sides of the volunteer programme.

7.5 Developmental Ideas

The MLL Southern District staff suggested that a similar type of video could be done for other activities and services provided by them. They expressed enthusiasm for the possible development of other products and stated that they may contact us in the future for further discussions and possibilities. Additionally, both the staff and the volunteers suggested that more pairs of FIMP mothers should be heard and seen in the scenario that there will be similar videos made in the future, and that it could show mothers of many different ages by contrasting the stories of older volunteers against those of younger volunteers.

The volunteers' responses in the feedback demonstrated the understanding that the target group was mainly the volunteer mothers and for that reason, they were the focus of the video. Therefore, a video project which solely focuses on immigrant mothers would be a good development idea for the future.

Initially, "Different, yet Friends" was the title of the video, but many respondents were of the opinion that this title had a negative connotation, especially when translated in Finnish language: "Erilaisia, silti Ystäviä". We did not receive any suggestions from the respondents, but we agreed that the word "Different" should be withdrawn from the title and that we should create a more positive sounding title. Therefore, we changed the title to "The Best of Friends", but we are of the opinion that the debate regarding the title is still open, as it is the whole product and this thesis in general.

From informal feedback, it was suggested that this type of project can also be done from the empowerment perspective, where the approach would be that the participants would firstly be instructed on video making technics and then would make the video themselves.

7.6 Distribution

It was initially planned, discussed and agreed upon by all parties involved in this thesis that the outcomes of this research would be made publicly available by both MLL and Metropolia UAS, and was also be distributed through different channels such as the internet, lectures, seminars, academic databases, and libraries in Finland. There is also a possibility of international distribution via the KAMU-project, which operates in conjunction with the European Social Fund. In this way, anyone with an interest in the same topic would be able to access this material. We acknowledge the existence of different types of copyrights laws for artists, authors, distributors, publishers for digital material as advocated and overseen by the Nordic Copyright Bureau (NCB) and the Finnish Copyright Society - Kopiosto.

We have made the video available in several different media formats of in order for it to function in different media systems or be showcased in various types of operative system platforms. Through the KAMU-project, the video was shown on its final seminar in the autumn 2014, where there were members of several organisations which work with immigrants in Finland, and many other guests.

7.7 Ethicality and Reliability

The ethical approach used in this thesis is based upon the ethical guidelines for social workers as prescribed by The Union of Professional Social Workers (Talentia) (2007), which it is based on the international code of ethics for health and social care professionals. From this point we will use the term “social worker” as to refer to all professionals working in the social field of work.

We are aware of the existence of laws overseeing the implementation of the above-mentioned guidelines such as the Finnish Criminal Law: Chapter 24 which covers privacy, peace, and defamation. The spirit of chapter 24 decrees that it is an offence to publish any information or material which shows a person’s image without their expressed consent (Finlex 2014). Although we are aware of the law, our main motivation for respecting the privacy of our client groups is due to morality and the use of good ethical practice.

The professional relationships should be developed and based upon the clients’ rights and respect. Workers in social field should continuously maintain and obtain skills needed for good networking (NASW 2008). Therefore, we made sure to stay in regular contact with MLL and the volunteers, in order to update them on our progress, to discuss challenges, and to ensure that both we and the volunteers have direct contact with each other.

Considering the recommendation of acting with informed consent advised by Talentia (2007), it was taken into consideration that the filming of children (defined as people less than 18 years of age) requires written consent from either their parents or legal guardian. When filming adults we asked for agreements which were done verbally due to the nature of the script. We were also mindful of the Finlex (2014) which declares that filmed passers-by shall not be identified in the video. Based on the same law, we also took into consideration the necessary legal procedures required in the form of permits and permissions for filming in both public and private places.

We made sure to explain to the volunteers what we were aiming to achieve, and what their role in our study would consist of. There was an occurrence when one of the volunteers wrote back to us to further clarify the exact nature of the study. We responded in a quick and friendly manner in order to allay any concerns that she may have had.

The end result was that the volunteer was happy with the response she received. This scenario demonstrates our willingness to enable participants to exercise the right to information which also includes making complaints and appeals in accordance with the Talentia (2007) guidelines.

The privacy and confidentiality of the participants is to be respected at all times (NASW 2008). Using the online questionnaire during the needs assessment period and confidential evaluative methods allows the participants to maintain their identity and anonymity. Additionally, the personal information of all participants in the video is protected, and all the filming data and any documented confidential information was disposed of or kept in secured locations of MLL or Metropolia UAS.

It is recommended that social workers have respect and awareness of different beliefs, values, culture, goals, needs and preferences. In addition, social workers should act with braveness against abuse of human rights (Talentia 2007). Due to the nature of the theme of our thesis, it was especially important that we adhered to these particular ethical guidelines. We considered the different cultures that we would be working with and if the need arose, adjusted our practices accordingly as to avoid any potential challenges which could have arisen. Additionally, we reflected upon our own cultures so that we were able to create an efficient and positive working environment.

Social field workers are strongly urged to understand the importance of keeping regularly professional records of their work, to learn the importance of participation in team or peer reflective sessions in order to improve practices, continuous, and systematic support in practices and researches that intent to develop and improve services. (BASW 2012: 12-16.) Whilst working on our thesis, we used the above-mentioned procedures in order to ensure that we were following good ethical practice. We made sure to keep thorough records of our meetings and discussions with MLL, the volunteers, and with each other. We allowed for time in order to enable us to be able to reflect and review our work practices, and to ensure that we were working in the most effective way possible.

We took into account the issues regarding reliability of this study: firstly by taking into consideration that neither we nor MLL would be able to influence the outcome of the study; secondly, by giving to the volunteers the autonomy to directly influence the contents of the video through PAR and evaluation process; and thirdly, by ensuring that

during the evaluation process, all feedback was anonymous in order to protect the identity and privacy of all the participants, and to make the process transparent. Additionally, the direct nature of the partnership between us and the volunteers reinforced the reliability of this study, as it removed any perceived interference from the parent organisation.

Decisions on the editing of videos can be manipulated for negative out-comes and sometimes the content can be sensitive for some people (Aufderheide 2007: 22). Another risk in showcasing a video is the possibility of misinterpretation of the scenes by the viewer and the producer's poor choice of content related to the intended topic or the aims of the learning (Smaldino et al. 2005: 288). Consequently, we also took into consideration these above-mentioned risks concerning ethics and reliability involved in all stages of development of this thesis product, including while editing and in the publication phase.

8 Discussion

We've come to the realisation that in this implementation report that the framework theories had been narrowed down in comparison to our idea paper which had brought a broader aspect of these theories. In fact, it has been a continuous learning process in which we had succeeded in many situations, but also encountered many challenges where alternative actions were required.

Putting theories into practice and finding the most suitable theories and academic knowledge for the methods and procedures used throughout the implementation process of this study had required a lot of thinking, researching, reading, networking and making use of the three dimensions of reflection as described by Kott and Scragg (2013) such as: reflection-before-action during the planning process of the video, gathering relevant information and reflecting on our expectations, reflection-in-action by taking time during the implementation phase to think on our expectations and questioning current events, reflection-on-action while we were writing and reflecting afterwards through the writing of this report. Subsequently, in this chapter we will have a short discussion regarding these above mentioned factors and the elements of our own learning process from this study.

Involving the volunteers in the process was initially thought as a good social pedagogical practice, but our first challenge was regarding how to involve them without interference

of the organisation. Having direct contact with the volunteers helped to implement minimal intervention during our study. We have also realised that by giving the participants the option to stay anonymous boosted the amount of volunteers interested to participate in our study, as can be seen by comparing the numbers and the flux of respondents of the needs assessment questionnaire via email versus the ones via the anonymous LimeSurvey internet survey, which received faster flux and a larger amount of responses.

During the testing sessions, we discussed and observed that none of the participants had questions about how in reality the programme looked like as it was often questioned during our attendance in the training course prior to the insertion of our video into the course programme. Additionally, we had a surprising positive response from the feedback question regarding video as a learning tool. All of the respondents agreed or very much agreed that listening, watching and through motion is a good way of learning.

Beside the positive feedback received, cross-cultural communication elements are continuously and clearly present throughout the video, since the scenes of the video are mainly showing interaction of two or more people of different cultural backgrounds. The stories are positive, as was intended with our developmental task, and as the theories regarding both the raising of awareness towards improved cross-cultural communicative skills and social pedagogy emphasise. We tried not to influence what the volunteers wanted to show and say in the film, and therefore we gave them the freedom to speak up openly about their own experiences of the FIMP without asking questions that led to obvious answers.

Even though, many of the participants in the testing sessions wished to also see challenging and even negative scenes of the FIMP in the video, it was not possible for us to find the people who had faced big challenges or had have negative experiences as they either did not want to participate or they were no longer part of the MLL FIMP. The existing FIMP pairs of mothers are the successful partnership stories. There is a separated part of the same volunteer's training course regarding possible challenges and negative experiences from the past FIMP volunteers. Nevertheless, our task was not to tackle these matters or to broaden the cross-cultural communication topic, but to bring an aspect of the basics of cross-cultural communication directly connected to the volunteers' working description.

In cooperation with the MLL Southern District, we have managed to incorporate the video in an innovative way into the MLL FIMP volunteers' training course as we planned to be our main developmental task. Additionally, we studied the video as a supportive cross-cultural communication learning tool for the FIMP volunteers by continuously consulting with them throughout the whole process, and made decisions based upon their views, opinions, feelings and experiences that they had shared with us. However, if we would have had more time and resources for this project, we could have had more FIMP pairs of mothers sharing their experiences. This was also pointed out by the volunteers in the feedback responses and we fully agree with them that it would bring more diversity into the video.

PAR as a methodology was very useful to us in order to make the proper ethical decisions by putting into practice what was set up to be the purpose of this study, and by utilising the social pedagogical elements of participation, democratic-voice and minimal intervention. The PAR elements of our project can be seen via the use of the needs assessment, the volunteers' participation in the video as interviewees, and the sharing their genuine experiences. In addition, volunteers gave feedback which we then used as ideas to make possible changes to the video. They also participated in the testing and retesting of the product, where we collected feedback and made separate observations.

In general and based on the feedback we received, both we as facilitators and the volunteers have learned from each other in during the project. We are in agreement with Parrott (2010) when he states that participation in social pedagogy means that social facilitators also participate in the activities connected to their study. We learned that by attending a FIMP volunteers training course prior to the production of the video, and two other ones in which the video feedback was conducted, that participating in these training courses enhanced our understanding of the FIMP volunteers as a target group.

We have learnt that working as a pair helps to solidify ideas in the way of critical thinking before they are implemented. All of our discussions were constructive even though we didn't always agree about everything. However, upon reflecting together, we tried to bring the most reasonable solutions and to find a common ground in both a respectful and professional manner. We have realised that our enthusiasm for doing this video and our great interest on the topic of cross-cultural communication helped us to transfer the same enthusiasm and motivation to the participants of this project, the working life

partner and to the other organisations which we had contacted. Networking was a very important aspect of the study and another skill that we feel that we have improved upon since the beginning of our project.

The sponsorship that we received from private business made us realise that support can be found outside the main circle of project partners, which in our case were MLL Southern District and the KAMU-project and Metropolia. A good example of this support was the receipt of a promotion spot in a well located and popular shopping centre that normally would cost more than one thousand euros per day to rent. However, we were given use of the promotion spot for an entire day free of charge. What we would do differently could be to look for sponsors earlier and try to get sponsorship for the DVD printing of our video, which would in turn allow us to target additional channels of distribution. Nonetheless, we feel that what we have learnt from this study during the planning, implementation and evaluative phases have contributed significantly to our growth as professionals, and will be of great use in our future professional careers as social pedagogues.

Based on the feedback received and developmental ideas, the application of our Bachelor thesis' product and methods in working life can be connected to occupations where volunteers are the target group, in volunteer organisations, other occupations connected to social pedagogy and cross-cultural communication, projects related to participatory action research (PAR) methodology, and to even cross-disciplinary studies and projects. However, these are just a few suggestions as we believe that this study can serve unlimitedly as a base for further developmental projects and studies.

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Hyvä vapaaehtoinen,

Osallistu kyselyyn ja vaikutta vapaaehtoisten koulutukseen tulevaisuuteen.

1. Millaisia kulttuurien välistä viestintää koskevia asioita olisi pitänyt käydä läpi vapaaehtoiskoulutuksessa?
2. Kerro jostakin mielenkiintoisesta tai positiivisesta yllätyksestä toisten kulttuurien kohtaamisesta vapaaehtoistyöskentelyn aikana?
3. Mitkä asiat ovat mielestäsi samanlaisia tai melko samankaltaisia sekä omassa että vieraissa kulttuureissa?
4. Lisäksi...

Tämän kyselyn tuloksien perusteella teemme käsikirjoituksen vapaaehtoisten koulutukseen tarkoitettuun opetusvideoon, jossa käsitellään kulttuurien välistä viestintää. MLL Uudenmaan piiri on meidän pääyhteistyökumppanimme ja toteutusaika on kevät 2014. Vastaa kyselyyn 30.1.2014 mennessä. Sähköisellä lomakkeella tällä.

Mikäli haluat kasvotusten haastateltavaksi tai osallistua opetusvideon tuotantoon tai saada lisää tietoa opetusvideon projektista *ottakaa* meihin *yhteyttä*: candive.kalohombo@metropolia.fi, iain.huntley@metropolia.fi, teija.silvonen@mll.fi, tai nadia.elradhi@mll.fi

Terveisin,

Candive ja Iain



LASKU

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| | Aleksandra Meyer | | | |
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Lasku toimitetaan laskutusosoitteeseen Metropolia ammattikorkeakoulu Oy, 16800534, PL 861, 00019 SSC

PALAUTE

MLL Ystäväksi Maahanmuuttajaäidille videon

1. Mielestäni video on hyvä keino oppia uusia asioita

☐ Täysin eri mieltä ☐ Eri mieltä ☐ Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä ☐ Samaa mieltä ☐ Täysin samaa mieltä

2. Tätä videota katsomalla saa hyvän yleiskuvan siitä mitä on odotettavissa Ystäväksi Maahanmuuttajaäidille toiminnasta.

☐ Täysin eri mieltä ☐ Eri mieltä ☐ Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä ☐ Samaa mieltä ☐ Täysin samaa mieltä

4. Tämän videon katsominen auttoi oppimaan lisää kulttuurien väliseen viestintään liittyvistä perusasioista.

☐ Täysin eri mieltä ☐ Eri mieltä ☐ Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä ☐ Samaa mieltä ☐ Täysin samaa mieltä

5. Tätä video voi käyttää uusien vapaaehtoisten motivointiin Ystäväksi toimintaa

☐ Täysin eri mieltä ☐ Eri mieltä ☐ Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä ☐ Samaa mieltä ☐ Täysin samaa mieltä

6. Mitä muuta haluaisit sanoa?

PALAUTE 2

MLL Ystäväksi Maahanmuuttajaäidille videon

1. Tämä video tukee pohdintaa ja keskustelua siitä, että monikulttuurisessa työympäristössä on tärkeää hahmottaa suhdetta omaan elämänhistoriaan, kulttuuriin, omiin arvoihin ja olettamuksiin inhimillisestä toiminnasta.

☐ Täysin eri mieltä ☐ Eri mieltä ☐ Samaa mieltä ☐ Täysin samaa mieltä

2. Tämä video voi tukea keskustelua, jossa pohditaan mm. miten omat ennakkoluulot ja uskomukset erilaisista kulttuurisista ryhmistä saattavat olla haasteellisia toimiessani MLL:n vapaaehtoistyössä?

☐ Täysin eri mieltä ☐ Eri mieltä ☐ Samaa mieltä ☐ Täysin samaa mieltä

3. Mitä muuta haluaisit sanoa videosta?

4. Mitä muuta haluaisit sanoa kysymyksestä 1 ja 2?

Kiitos vastauksestasi!